



## SRC Calendar:

- Monday, Feb. 21**
- **10 am:** Senate labor committee hearing on child care worker and part-time college faculty wages, SHR 4, TVW
  - **Noon:** Pro forma session
  - **Noon to 1:30 pm:** Children's Alliance "Have a Heart for Kids Day" rally: Capitol steps. Est. attendance: 500
  - **1:30 pm:** Senate Ways & Means Committee hearing on simple majority bill (SB 5144-Eide), SHR 4, TVW
  - **3:30 pm:** Senate health care committee hearing on mental health parity (SB 5450-Thibaudeau), SHR 4, TVW

- Tuesday, Feb. 22**
- **7:15 am:** Tuesday Morning Fellowship: JAC ABC
  - **9:15 am:** Rules meeting
  - **10 am:** Senate gov. ops. committee hearing on creating a new state in E. Washington (SJM 8009-Morton), SHR 2
  - **10 am:** Senate labor committee hearing on minimum wage study and minor league baseball, SHR 4, TVW
  - **1:30 pm:** Senate Ways & Means Committee hearing on streamlined sales tax bills (SB 5622 and 5908), SHR 4, TVW
  - **Noon:** Pro forma session

- Wednesday, Feb. 23**
- **7:30 am:** YMCA Youth Legislative Governor's Reception: Rotunda and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor hallway. Est. attendance: 100
  - **8 am:** Senate health care committee hearing on statewide smoking ban (SB 5592-McAuliffe), SHR 4, TVW
  - **10 am:** Floor action and caucus
  - **3:30 pm:** Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on SB 5457 (Esser)—Increasing penalties for failure to secure vehicle loads, SHR 1

- Thursday, Feb. 24**
- **8 am:** Senate gov. ops. committee hearing on GMA issues, SHR 2, TVW
  - **Noon:** Pro forma session and special caucus meeting
  - **Noon:** Washington State Catholic Conference Catholic Advocacy Day: Columbia Room. Est. attendance: 150
  - **6 pm:** Senate labor committee hearing on "retro-bution" (SB 5842-Doumit), SHR 4

- Friday, Feb. 25**
- **8 am:** Senate education committee hearing on achievement gap and equity issues, SHR 1, TVW
  - **10 am:** Floor session

- Sat/Sun, Feb. 26**
- **Lincoln Day Dinners**



## Health Savings Accounts (SB 5202/HB 1383)

**JOBSWATCH grade:** **A**

Washington's state-funded health care costs are increasing at a rate of 11 percent annually. Senate Bill 5202 and House Bill 1383 would allow Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) for state employees as a less expensive health care coverage option. SB 5202 and HB 1383 are good first steps for expanding HSAs across the public and private sectors to drive down health care costs and expand access to health care coverage.

**GRADE:** These bills receive an "A" for allowing more affordable health care options for working families and establishing HSAs as a viable alternative for private employers to reduce costs and provide health coverage for their employees.

**STATUS:** SB 5202 was heard in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee on Feb. 14. HB 1383 has not been scheduled for a hearing.

## Pay-or-Play (SB 5637/HB 1702)

**JOBSWATCH grade:** **F**

These bills require businesses with more than 50 workers to pay the state a fee to provide health care coverage through the state's Basic Health Plan—even if they already provide coverage.

**GRADE:** These bills receive an "F" because they undermine efforts to get Washington back to work, resulting in up to 25,500 lost jobs—3,300 with health benefits—and costing businesses up to \$1.6 billion in the first year.

**STATUS:** These bills were heard in the respective House and Senate health care committees on Feb. 17.

## SRC in the News

- **Walla Walla Union Bulletin story on linking minimum wage to jobless rate:** Will recent outsourcing at the Golden Arches be the golden ticket for slowing down the state's minimum wage? Washington state **Sen. Mike Hewitt** hopes so. Hewitt, R-Walla Walla, is making another attempt at a bill that would modify the inflationary adjustment to Washington's minimum wage, the highest of any state in the country. (*Walla Walla UB*, 2/16/05)
- **Seattle Times Editorial on the I-297 dispute in the Tri-Cities:** **Sen. Jerome Delvin**...supports (clarifying I-297 to support local companies) — even though he opposed the initiative. Delvin's approach is more pragmatic than his district-mates' (*Reps. Shirley Hankins and Larry Haler*) heel digging — and more credible. The Legislature should follow his lead. (*Seattle Times*, 2/16/05)